

## TEDDY AND THE WOLF.

BY TUDOR JENKS.

THE Doctor had said, "Now, Mr. Rowland, I will be frank with you. Unless you get away from the city, and stay away, I will not answer for the consequences!"

Of course there could be no hesitation after that, and Mr. Rowland, Mrs. Rowland, and Teddy packed up their little keepsakes, sold everything else, and transferred themselves to Bartonville.

Here the breadwinner of the family bought a slender stock of goods and opened a small store.

"You will see how I shall prosper," he said to his wife. "My city experience will give me a great advantage over the other tradesmen. I shall be more business-like, and if you and little Teddy will only thrive as well as I shall make my trade thrive, we will not regret the stifling city!"

So far as Mrs. Rowland was concerned, there was nothing to complain about. After two months in the new home, she had grown rosy and bright; as rosy and pretty as Teddy himself; and he was by far "the finest five-year-old in town,"—even his father admitted it.

But, alas! for the thriving trade. Mr. Rowland had put all his money into the hoes and rakes, axes and brooms, which stood looking so clean and trim before the door. They stood bravely to their posts, and equally faithful were the rolls of cloth and barrels and boxes on duty indoors. But hardly a strange foot crossed the threshold to mar the freshly sanded floor; only a few villagers from curiosity strayed aimlessly in and out again, to make their purchases elsewhere. Many, in welcoming the new-comer, had reminded him that "competition was the life of trade," but he was beginning to think, sadly enough, that it was also the death of trade, in some cases at least. The rent, the butcher, the baker, and candlestick-maker, had taken the few dollars saved "to get a good start." Mrs. Rowland had darned and criss-crossed Teddy's red stockings into ridges and lumps; she had turned and "fixed" her few dresses until she felt that her worried little brain needed turning and darning, too. But their money was gone, and the thriving trade had not begun.

Mr. Rowland tried to be hopeful, but his set lips grew into a grim hardness; and he talked less and less of his prospects as the future became more uncertain.

Teddy found no fault. He admired his well-mended stockings, and pitied those who lacked the picturesque variety of contrasted patches. Soon after the sun was well above the hills, Teddy's bread and milk made its daily visit to his bowl, and Teddy never thought of asking awkward questions in the case of either mystery.

One morning the discouraged store-keeper went to the bank to draw out his last small balance.

"Going to close your account?" asked Mr. Prentice, the president, who always was particular to speak to his customers.

"For a time, only, I hope!" replied Mr. Rowland bravely, counting the few small bits of paper with thoughts far away from any consideration of arithmetic.

"You must not withdraw your patronage," said the smiling president, as he turned and walked back into his cosy office.

Mr. Rowland was unusually silent during the evening, and even forgot to tell Teddy his regular story before putting him to bed. The little boy noticed his father's depression, and kept very quiet. When his mother began to look meaningfully at the clock, Teddy came and said good-night, and went to bed without a word of objection.

"Poor boy! He must be tired out," said Mrs. Rowland, when she returned to the room. Then she sat down to her stocking-basket.

But Teddy was not tired; he was thinking. He was wondering what troubled his father. Teddy did not mean to lie awake, much less to listen to the conversation between his father and mother. The door was ajar, and he could not help noticing that the usual reading aloud was omitted; nor could he fail to hear a word or two, now and then. What he heard convinced him that he was right in thinking his father out of sorts and worried, and also made him sure that he knew what was the trouble. He heard his father saying:

"So you see, Anna, there's no need for me to go to the store. I might just as well be here with you; at least I could be at work in the garden, and then there would be something done toward keeping the wolf from the door!"

Teddy heard no more, for he fell fast asleep. But when he awoke next morning his mind was made up, and soon after his plans were matured.

"Are you going to the store?" he asked his father with some surprise, when the good-bye kiss was given.

"Yes, Teddy; somebody may come in, and I must be there," replied the father, as he trudged slowly down the gravel walk.

Teddy watched him anxiously, and then turned briskly toward the house. The first thing to do was to get his bow-gun. He did not remember where he had put it, but that did not disquiet him—he would ask his mother.

"Mamma, where is my gun?" asked Teddy in perfect confidence.

"Where did you leave it?" asked his mother, a little absent-mindedly. Teddy leaned up against the kitchen-table with one small finger in his mouth and tried to think. But he had n't an idea. At length Mrs. Rowland said:

"You were playing African hunter yesterday, and borrowed your father's big boots. Go and find the boots, and perhaps you may find the gun, too."

Teddy climbed the attic stairs, two steps to each stair, found the gun stowed away in one of the boots, and was so impressed by his mother's suggestion, that he almost resolved to consult so clever a mother about the terrible wolf.

But Teddy was accustomed to rely upon himself, and had been so often told to try his own powers before seeking help, that he concluded to keep his own counsel. Now that he had the gun, he sought the next thing needed for his plan. This was something which had not occurred to him until just as he was parting his hair that morning, on the third trial, for Teddy liked "the little paf to the top of the head" very straight indeed.

"Mamma, can I go and get something from Papa's workshop?" he asked, when he came back to the kitchen. "I won't hurt myself a bit; and I don't want to tell you what it is!"

"Yes, Teddy," said Mrs. Rowland, hardly noticing the strange request,—she was thinking of the wolf, too!

Away went the sturdy, small cross-bowman through the thick grass, taking the shortest cut. Presently he returned carrying with him a steel-trap. After scouting a little, Teddy satisfied himself that the coast was clear, and dragged the trap around to the front door. He felt sure that this must be the door his father meant, for it was almost always closed and bolted. He placed the trap cleverly enough before the door, but by a trifling oversight forgot, or else did not know enough, to set it. Then Teddy retired to an ambush behind a thick evergreen, strung his cross-bow with a care which would not have been

discreditable to Denys himself, and awaited all comers.

About half an hour afterward Mr. Prentice, walking leisurely down to the bank, like a man who could afford to take his time, caught sight of a curly, golden head in Mr. Rowland's front-yard. He stopped, for he was fond of Teddy and often paused to say a word to him. Teddy thought Mr. Prentice the greatest man in the world—next to his own father. So, when the banker rubbed the little curls with his gold-headed stick and said, "Hullo, Curly-head! Are you too proud to pass the time of day with a friend this morning?" Teddy rose from behind the tree, tip-toed close to the fence, and replied almost in a whisper, "Dood-morning, Mr. Prentice. Please teep twiet, and go 'way, please, as twick as you can!"

Somewhat surprised and alarmed, the banker asked, "Is your mother sick, Teddy?"

"No, sir. She's well; but she's afraid!"

"Afraid? Afraid of what? Where is your father? Anything wrong?" Mr. Prentice was seriously troubled. He had little children of his own, and wild visions of contagious diseases, accidents, and disasters were jumbled in his brain.

"Papa's gone to the store. I dess he was afraid, too," said Teddy, sagaciously.

"What is it, Teddy?" said the banker, sternly.

"It's a wolf," replied Teddy in a mere whisper, looking uneasily around and wishing, for the first time, that Mr. Prentice would stop talking to him and not interfere with his plans.

"A wolf!" said Mr. Prentice, first looking blank and then laughing heartily. "Why, Teddy, you're a goose! There are no wolves for hundreds of miles around. Somebody has been making fun of you."

"Yes, there are! There's one wolf, anyway," said the boy, with a nod of wisdom.

"What makes you think so?" asked Mr. Prentice, for he was one of those who think it not an unwise precaution to find out what children mean before laughing at them.

Teddy was pleased by the respectful tone, and felt a wish to be polite in return. So, trusting that the enemy would be kind enough to defer the attack for a few moments, he told his grown-up friend how he had heard "Papa tell Mamma that he did n't know how he was going to teep that wolf from coming in that door!"

"And," continued Teddy, "I got the wolf out of my Noah's Ark, so that I could tell him when he came, and I got the twap out for him, and my gun. Papa's got to be down at the store, so's if anybody *should* come there. And Mamma can't fight, 'cause she's a girl, and there's nobody home but me—unless you'll stay?" Teddy glanced at the

kindly face above him, as if even his brave heart would not disdain a companion in arms.

"My gun *hurts*, too!" he resumed, with pride (for the banker had not said a word in reply). "Want to see?" and he offered to demonstrate its effectiveness against his friend's leg.

Mr. Prentice looked toward the door of the house. There lay the trap half hidden under a spray of evergreen. Then he picked up the brave little huntsman and gave him a kiss, put him down softly, and walked away without a word. His hands were clasped behind him and he was thinking something about "—and thy neighbor as thyself."

Teddy went back to his post, but he was puzzled, and his singleness of purpose was gone.

During the day, Mr. Prentice spoke to Mr. Dustan, one of the directors of the bank.

"Seen what a nice new store it is, that Mr. Rowland has? He's a new-comer. You ought to give him a little of your custom now and then; he's one of our depositors, you know, and one good turn deserves another! Really, Dustan, he's got a nice family, and you'd oblige me if you could favor him with an order now and then."

Mr. Dustan said he would — of course, he would.

Time he changed, anyway; the other tradesmen were becoming careless, competition was a good thing! Then they talked of banking matters.

Mr. Prentice managed to say another word to another friend that same afternoon; and to yet another the next morning, and he did not forget to take care that his suggestions should bear fruit.

The result was very bad for the wolf. Teddy did n't see him. In fact, after dinner, Teddy forgot all about the animal, for one of the older boys came along and took the hunter out fishing.

Mr. Rowland was at first much surprised at the sudden tide of custom and prosperity. Many came, and finding "the new man" civil and obliging, accurate and punctual, they came again.

Some weeks later Mr. Rowland said to his wife, with an air of some profundity:

"Anna, my dear, patience is sure to tell in the long run! I came very near to giving up in despair; but, you see, the darkest hour was just before the dawn. There is nothing like a bold front, to scare the wolf from the door!"

Mrs. Rowland looked lovingly at her husband and thought him a very clever man.

But Teddy was sleeping the sleep of the just, and as for Mr. Prentice, he never told the story of their little wolf-hunt.

## SEASIDE FLOWERS.

BY CELIA THAXTER.



LONG the edge of the curving cove the small, blue skull-cap sits,  
Where the gray beach-bird with happy cry in safety feeds and flits,  
There spreads or shuts the pimpernel its drowsy buds to tell  
When rain will come, or skies will clear, the pretty pimpernel!  
The pink herb-robert all the day holds up its rosy flowers,  
While high above with a purple plume the lofty thistle towers,  
The golden potentilla blows, and the crowfoot laughs in the sun,

While over rock and bush and turf wild morning-glories run.  
They look down o'er the tiny cove, out to the blue, blue sea,  
Neighbors and friends, all beautiful, a joyful company;  
When the full tide comes brimming in, with soft and gentle rush,  
It is as if the murmuring sound said to the silence, "Hush!"  
All down the narrow beach the lilac mussel-shells are strown  
Among the scattered pebbles and by the polished stone  
Where the sea's hands have worn the ledge till smooth as ivory,—  
Oh, such a place on summer days to put your cheek, and lie  
Listening to all the whispering waves that round the point go by!  
For the sun has warmed the hard cold rock till it almost human seems,  
And such a pillow as it makes for childhood's blissful dreams!